

Empty Chemical Containers

WHAT IS EMPTY?

According to hazardous waste regulations, most chemical containers are "empty" if you have used "normal means," such as inverting, shaking and scraping, to empty the container.

If the chemical is "extremely hazardous" or a pesticide:

1. Triple rinse the container, collecting the rinse water into a separate sturdy, compatible screw-top container.
2. Dispose of the rinse water as hazardous waste.

CONTAINER REUSE

If possible, reuse your empty chemical container for disposal of that same chemical or compatible chemicals.

1. Cross out or remove the original label.
2. Place a new hazardous waste label on the container.

You can download hazardous waste labels from the EH&S website.

CONTAINER DISPOSAL

If needed, dry the empty container in a well ventilated area.

- Use a fume hood (if you have one) or find an area away from where people are working.
- Deface the container and place it next to your lab trash, or dispose of it in your building's garbage dumpster.

CONTAINER RECYCLING

Containers for the chemicals listed below can be recycled:

- acetone
- alcohols
- hexane, toluene, xylene
- nontoxic buffers, salts
- sugars, nutrients
- cleaning products

Ensure that these containers are empty and dry, with no chemical residue, keeping in mind that they will be hand sorted by recycling employees.

Remove and discard caps, deface labels, and place the containers in the appropriate toter or dumpster at your building's loading dock.

Please do not use the public area or classroom/conference room cans and bottles receptacles.

Finally, as with food and drink containers, only certain types of empty containers are recyclable at this time:

- all plastic bottles and tubs (no hard plastics such as lids, vials and trays)
- all glass containers except Pyrex (lab glass) and bottles with anti-shatter coating
- all metal containers except for aerosol cans (these are managed as "hazardous waste" if still pressurized, marked "empty" and placed in the trash if not)

For additional information, visit www.ehs.washington.edu or call 206.543.7262.